



Published on *BMGI* (<http://www.bmgi.com>)

[Home](#) > Printer-friendly PDF

---

# Why Hire a Professional

## Why Hire a Professional

### Finding true Enablers

Finding true Enablers



#### **Abstract / Teaser:**

At BMGI, we couldn't agree more that consultants are often just necessary evils, which is why we think of ourselves as anti-consultants

You have 30,000 really smart, experienced people in your company, so why in the world do you need to hire outside help—for anything? Even though this question has been asked many times before, the answer never quite seems good enough. For the most part, companies don't even like consultants; they just hire them when they feel they must or should, begrudgingly we might add.

At BMGI, we couldn't agree more that consultants are more often than not just necessary evils. In fact we're particularly irked by consultants, which is why we think of ourselves as anti-consultants who strive to be everything that consultants aren't.

We're coaches, mentors, facilitators and teachers who turn the classic dependency on consultants upside down. In a nutshell, no holds barred, we will not rest until we know you can succeed on your own, and we gear everything we do to that end as enablers, not consultants.

Now it's true—our clients often refer to us as consultants, having that word so engrained in their vernacular that we feel powerless to change it. But consultants we're not. We do, however, enable you to solve problems, because all of life and business is about just that—solving problems. And you know better than we do that, as organizations change and grow, the problems tend to become more difficult and complex.

---

So why do you need help? There are many reasons, not the least of which has been the number-one peril reported in the business literature over the last five years: decision-making bias. No matter how good you think your thinking is, or how spot-on you've all agreed your due diligence is, there's some probability you're wrong. Even with a consultant or enabler, even with the help of BMGI, there's still a probability you'll be wrong or make a misstep—but at least you've called in another party to test your thinking, and for that reason alone you're better off.

Aside from the problems we articulated in our headline story, here are some more reasons you need an enabling facilitator or, if you like, a consultant:

## **1. Diverse perspective**

The very nature of a team—in particular a cohesive team of people that work and play well together—is that over time you begin to think alike. In fact, the management literature speaks often of the importance of “alignment,” meaning that it's important to line up everyone's marching to the beat of the same drummer, moving in the same direction. But this then creates a paradox whereby we say we value diversity of thought and opinion, and we choose people with different experience and backgrounds to be on our team, but then the team eventually converges (or regresses) to a state of groupthink. Over time, even the best of management teams loses their way when it comes to honoring true diversity, and the only way to get it back is to either replace people, or compliment them with outside perspectives.

## **2. Problem-solving expertise**

Already featured on this website is a rather lengthy explanation of the role problem solving plays in life and business. Becoming an expert in sophisticated problem-solving tools, however, has not been the focus of many executives' careers. In fact, at BMGI we think of problem solving as a profession unto itself. While it's true most homeowners know how to use a hammer, few are actually world-class carpenters. Similarly, while most executives engage in day-to-day problem solving, few have mastered the tools needed to solve the complex problems encountered in today's global business environment. Fewer still have any clue as to how to think probabilistically, as the work of Nassim Taleb (author of *The Black Swan* and *Fooled by Randomness*) so aptly (and incorrectly from a political standpoint) exposes. If you think those decisions you made last year were good, because they worked out for you, apparently you don't realize you have some probability of getting things right, even for years, on the basis of randomness alone, just as the guy who flips the coin ten times and comes up with ten heads has no inherent ability to create that outcome. Meanwhile, just because you got it right, you don't know what your probability was of not getting it right; nor did you calculate the devastating effects of maybe getting it wrong relative to the modest gains you've realized by getting it right (okay maybe you did, but in that case you're not normal). This is just scratching the surface of what we believe is a budding science and art: problem solving itself.

## **3. Objectivity**

Sorting truth from myth, setting aside personal interests, and asking provocative questions is something that is difficult to do, especially in today's more hierarchical organizations. Still, BMGI enablers are the types who are more than willing to take the personal risk involved in playing the

---

devil's advocate—telling you why you are not ready to do what you say you want to do just because doing it could line our pockets. We'd rather tell you you're not ready and keep building our reputation that way. When you are ready to solve that problem, or when you are ready to focus on the real problem—the endemic, real one—of course we'll be there for you to hire. We'll also be there to help you identify the problems that really do carry operational leverage that, when solved, ignite far-reaching positive transformation and avoid those nasty unintended consequences. Our job at BMGI is to rely on our deep experience with scientific thinking and the use of objectivity tools to save ourselves and our clients from their own limited thinking. It's our job and you may not like it, and we might not even like it if it means turning down business, but we'll always drive to the truth, the objective truth, as much as that is possible.

#### **4. Facilitation**

Business leaders are not facilitators by nature; they are competitors by nature, conquisitors if you will. On the continuum, some business leaders are consensus-builders who subtly use their power to get everyone in agreement; others are purely militant autocrats who make it clear that they don't care who agrees or disagrees, as we're doing it this way or that way regardless. Either way, you need expert facilitation because things have to get done in settings that require the agreement, commitment, coordination and shared passion of many people who reside on other sides of all kinds of business functions, departments and processes. We won't get into the verities of how stakeholders always have different perspectives and goals, and how so often incentives and even corporate priorities are simply at odds with each other by definition. That's another discussion. This discussion is about the clear need for expert facilitation at various times in various places when a lot is on the line, and disparate parts of the organization have to come together to achieve some common goal. In situations that meet these criteria, it's often best to have an outside professional pull off the integration of people and plans. No one inside the company, then, is the good guy or the bad guy. The BMGI facilitator is just the guy (or gal) who gets done what needs to get done—knowing when to be aggressive, when to back off and bite the tongue and when to bring in the right tools to keep the conversation and momentum going.

#### **5. Relentless focus**

Sometimes what's needed most is a relentless focus on a specific problem, but the busy manager with direct reports and multiple bosses in today's matrixed organization really has no more than an hour for any given subject, project or initiative. Yet even at the speed of business, the idea that all things can be crammed into a short conversation or even one all-day meeting, is spurious at best and not wrong to call simply ludicrous. When we reviewed the worker productivity literature, for instance, we found that engineers who focus on just one or two projects are more productive on those projects than they are when they try to splinter their time among many projects. In breaking this down, we readily know as humans that everything has a ramp-up period, time for dwelling and getting into the essence of the problem, especially when any extent of creativity is involved. And most of business, regardless that we sometimes think it's all scientific and data-driven, requires the brain and creative faculty to integrate and assess all that data into sound decisions that are anything but straightforward in their logical breakdown. No, great business leadership is not like clockwork, even though managers and even specialists are beholden to it by virtue of their multitudinous commitments. This endemic reality in corporations,

---

and the undeniable fact that certain projects and activities require great lengths of focused concentration, make way for that necessary evil: the consultant, or the enabler as we prefer. If you need it in simpler terms, most companies are simply no good at resource planning and think that somehow managers and workers can just do more—but the jury is out: they can't, especially when the work requires relentless focus. Only a fine-tuned outsider—free from the routines, staff meeting, fires to fight and constant splintered disruptions—can bring the proper skills to bear in solving a problem quickly.

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.bmgi.com/problem-solving/articles/why-hire-professional>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.bmgi.com/category/article-tags/problem-solving>